NUMB. XLIV.

# THE PLAIN DEALER.

*Obſequium amicos, veritus, odium parit.*— TEREN.

*Fortior, eſt qui ſe, quam qui fortiſſima vincit*
*Mœnia*———— VIRG.

*Nil agit exemplum, litem quod lite reſolvit.*— HOR.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21. 1724.

I Was viſited, ſome Days ago, by ſeveral of my diſtinguiſh'd Friends; and, on this Occaſion, muſt particularly name the *Major*, and *Ned Volatile*, in regard they were the principal Perſons concerned in that Afternoon's Converſation, which gave Birth to this Day's Paper.

The Diſcourſe turn'd upon a Subject, to which a late unhappy Rencounter furniſh'd too many Materials: 'Twas the Diſpute between Two dear and inſeparable Friends, which ended not, but with the Life of one of them. The Perſonal Acquaintance, that ſome of us had with one, or both, of the Gentlemen, continued our Converſation longer, and carried our Reflections farther, than we ſhould elſe have allow'd of, at a Time, when we met to give, and receive a mutual Pleaſure.

The *Point of Honour*, which is uſually the Foundation, upon which theſe unhappy Diſputes are grounded, was, by the *Major*, beautifully explain'd, and ſet in a juſt Light, oppoſite to the too generally miſtaken Notions of that noble Qualification; and which *Ned* had too warmly debated, 'till *Will. Weathercock* diverted his puſhing it to Extremity, by the ſeaſonable Interpoſition of his peculiar Judgment. *Will's* Deciſions, as the *Pagans* painted their *Janus*, always appear with *Two Faces*, which favour both Parties, and reconcile them in good Humour. Nevertheleſs, we could not leave the Subject intirely, without a Progreſs of Reflection upon the Fatality of ſudden Startings, and ungovernable Paſſions, which are too much indulg'd, and but too little provided againſt, by the Generality of Mankind.

I remember 'twas agreed to, that moſt of the ill Blood, Debates, and Quarrels, that happen, owe their Original to Unconcern, and Careleſneſs about our Humour in Converſation. A Man muſt be Maſter of himſelf, and preſerve a watchful Guard over his Behaviour in Company, if he would either *pleaſe*, or be *pleaſed*. There is a natural Liberty, which all Mankind claims by Right; but the miſtaken Uſe of it, frequently leads to Miſchief. A licentious, or rambling, Tongue proves, very often, as injurious to Society, as Treaſon to a State; and Traitors ſmart no more, frequently, for *This Guilt*, than Prattlers for *That Folly*.

*Ned Volatile*, not yet quite cool, broke in upon our Chain of Reaſoning, by aſſerting, 'That a ſtrict 'Watch over one's Words, Actions, and Humour, in 'all Companies, is a Reſtraint, which, in his Opinion, differ'd nothing from Torture. What! ſaid he, muſt I be always under the Slavery of *thinking* before I ſpeak? Shall I never have the Pleaſure of 'expreſſing my own Sentiments? Who would ſacrifice his natural Rights, to pleaſe another Man? 'Would any, but a *Fool*, or *Flatterer*, praiſe what 'he *hates*? or, declare himſelf an Enemy to what he '*loves*, merely to ſhew his *good Humour*, or *Complaiſance*? No, Gentlemen, I maintain, That *Grandeur* '*itſelf*, would be too dear bought at this Price; and 'whoever affirms the contrary, is no Friend to *Plain-Dealing*.

He paus'd here, and look'd at *me* for Approbation. I was going to diſtinguiſh, and remark the Circumſtances that ſhould be punctually regarded, when the *Major* begg'd to be heard. 'The Reſtraint, ſaid he, 'that you repreſent ſo dreadful, gives more Satisfa'ction, than Pain. Your Complaiſance, and good 'Humour, is more your own Intereſt, than your 'Companion's. Is it not for your own Sake, that 'you accommodate yourſelf to his Humour, from 'whom you hope good Offices, or expect agreeable 'Entertainment? Do you take for Diſſimulation a 'Guard of Prudence, which induces you to ſeem in the 'Sentiments of a Man, whom you would willingly 'draw into yours, when either your Intereſt, or In'clination, requires it? For my Part, I think you 'have a Right to applaud yourſelf, when you can 'enter agreeably into oppoſite Humours: What in'duc'd all the Antients to admire the pliant Conduct 'of *Alcibiades*? And why do we *ſtill wonder*, that a 'Man could ſo aptly accommodate himſelf to the 'different Manners of the ſeveral Countries where he 'liv'd? Nothing was ſo much talk'd of at *Athens*, as 'his *Eloquence*, and *Gallantry*. Among the *Perſians*, 'he was alwas *feaſting*, and nothing was ſeen more 'ſplendid, than his *Dreſs* and *Equipage*; but he 'paſs'd over to oppoſite Manners, when he was 'obliged to go to *Sparta*; for *there* the moſt rigid '*Lacedæmonian* led a Life leſs *auſtere* than *Alcibi'ades*.

'*Alcibiades*, cry'd *Ned Volatile*, was an Affector 'of *Popularity*. His Maxim was like that of a Friend 'of mine, *Cum fueris Romæ, Romano vivito More*. 'But, hang it——I hate that Suppleneſs of Humour. 'It may be neceſſary for Embaſſadors and Travellers; 'but *Ned Volatile* has nothing to do with it.

He was proceeding, in his uſual Volubility of Speech, when I interrupted him, in the following Manner.

'I am ſorry my Friend *Volatile* would decry one of 'the Bleſſings, upon which the Happineſs of *Society* 'is, in a great Meaſure, founded. The Commerce 'of Life requires our Regard to Variety of Humours 'every Day, and when *Nature* denies the Maſtery 'of them, Men ſhould endeavour to *acquire* it. Who 'would not *rejoice with* a Friend, newly, and happily, married? *Congratulate one* juſt arriv'd from 'his

his Travels? Or *Condole* with *another* on the Loss of an only, and valuable Son? This is no Suppleness, no Inequality of Humour; 'Tis a Sweetness, 'tis a Virtue. Tell me; Would not yourself, in the Presence of a Gay Prince, devoted to his Pleasures, appear with a chearful Countenance? Or, Would you accost with a smiling Air, a cloudy, and suspicious, one? No more is it fitting to carry a Passion into Company disagreeable to that which reigns in it, or to discover a *Mien* which condemns the Sentiments wherewith the Company is prepossessed. In short, nothing is more opposite to the Maxims of Civil Society, than an Opinionative, and Dogmatical, Conduct; and he who will obstinately follow it, is in Danger of never getting new Friends, and even of losing his old ones. I wish I could say, That these Duels, and Deaths, we have been speaking of, are not its common Consequences.

'I have heard, and enter into your Sentiments with Pleasure, said *Ned Volatile*; but allow me, at least, to affirm, That one who is thus Master of his Temper, must never abuse this Power; never betray his Sentiments, in maintaining an Error, or in giving Praises to Words or Actions, that he is sensible do not deserve it.

'Right, answered I. ——*How* then, said he, or *wherein*, do you appear Master of your Humour? ——When I submit it, replied I, to that of others, or decline my own Will to theirs, to whom I would shew a Deference, my *Words*, at least, my *Silence*, should carry Tokens of my Complaisance. As for Example; Did one whom I would not displease, commend an ill Man, not well known to him? or, who had wrong'd, or disoblig'd me? In such Case, I would stifle, and conceal my Resentment; and be silent, since I could not be of the same Opinion with a Person whom I was unwilling to offend.

'No, no, cry'd *Ned Volatile*, if ever I subject my Humour, it shall be to the *Ladies*; There are many *Capricios*, that must be borne with, from them; but, in all other Cases, *my Mind is my Kingdom*; *I am absolute, and will be so.*

He ran on, to this Purpose, near a Quarter of an Hour; and, at last, happening to touch again on the Article of Honour and Friendship, which had introduc'd the Subject of our Discourse, the *Major* requested him to hear a Story, in which, an *Example* of both these valuable Distinctions would better plead for their right Use, than any Account he could give of *his own particular Sense* of them. The Story, said the *Major*, is Modern; but not well known; and amongst all the Instances of Bravery, is a fine, and uncommon Display of it. 'Tis what most *Fighters* would think below them, yet, what none, but a Conqueror, could come up to.

*Altamont*, and *Honorius*, were both Men of Quality, and of Eminence in the Army, wherein they had served long in Friendship together. *Altamont* was, deservedly, placed in the full Height of Power and Preferment: *Honorius*, interior but a small Degree in Post, was greatly so in Fortune; but he was fill'd with Princely Virtues, and his Soul had a distinguish'd Greatness: He had been a Sharer in the whole Course of *Altamont*'s innumerable Glories. ——*Honorius*, on some after-Occasion, whether, as suppos'd, by *Altamont*'s Breach of Promise, or what other Ground for Resentment happened, is neither known, nor material to be debated; 'tis sufficient to tell you, That *Honorius* was so disoblig'd, that he sent *Altamont* a Challenge, to determine their Difference, in a Duel, at a Time appointed, in *Hyde-Park*.

At the Time in which *Altamont* received this Challenge, he was so deeply ingaged in a Trust, whereon depended the Preservation of the King's Person, and Government, that he could not sacrifice, or neglect them, by risquing his important Life, in a Personal Quarrel, at that Juncture; but knowing well the Honour and Bravery of *Honorius*, and jealous too of his own, he sent for *Carolinus* early that Morning, in which he was to fight. ——'*Brother*, said he, you know how much of the Weight of Governmen lies at this Time upon my Shoulders, and there a some secret Concerns of State, to which you are ye a Stranger. I am called upon to a *Duel*: It co cerns a Case of *Honour*, and my Adversary is a Ma of Bravery. *You* must meet him, in my Stead, an give him the Satisfaction he requires.

*Carolinus*, resolved to act in his Brother's Caus as in his own, without Delay, went to meet his un known Opponent; but when he arrived at the de stin'd Spot, he was confounded, to see him the *deare Friend he had upon Earth!* 'Good God! said *Honorius* to what am I fated? I expected your *Brother*, an is it *You*, my *Carolinus!*' *It is*, replied *Carolinus* with a Sigh! ——They gaz'd on each other; the Breasts were agitated by a Tempest of warring Pa sions! ——After a Length of silent Confusion, *Hon rius* thus addressed himself to *Carolinus* ——'Yo are that very Friend, I ever called, and though you; You are the Man who have so often vow the most sincere, and exalted, Friendship for me. am, replied *Carolinus*, and I bring with me the sam devoted Heart, a Sacrifice to your Disposal! If yo survive, you will know my Innocence, and the Caus why I am here, which weighty Reasons, forbids th Discovery of at present; But come —— *Since it mu be thus.*' ——They both advanc'd, and in that In stant, *Honorius* cry'd, *Hold, my* Carolinus! *'Tis done The Struggle of my Soul is over, and our Dispute at a End. I am determin'd! I will not, I cannot, break th Chain that has bound our Souls so long together; no, no for your Brother's Power, or my Prince's Crown.* —— They continued some time in Disorder and Expostula tion. Both of them were brave, sovereignly brave and none ever lived, who better knew what Honou was, or could defend it more nobly!

*Honorius* went on; ——'Well, my Friend, 'til now, I never felt Extremity. Your Brother, wh has done me Wrong, ought to give me Satisfaction and, were he here, I could not sheath my Sword unsatisfied; but you are my *Friend*, with whom *can have no Difference.* I would die a Thousand Deaths to *save*, or to *serve* you; and I will put the greatest Force upon my Nature, and even as *Pardon* of the Man who has *injur'd* me, rather than hazard a Life, so much more precious than my own. But, let us leave this Place with Speed; I'll give up my Resentment: Let your Brother, let the World, treat my Conduct, at their Pleasure: There is nothing, but my Hopes of Heaven, that I would not hazard for my *Carolinus.* —— He went, and did as he said; and whatever Constructions the World might put upon *Altamont*'s Behaviour, and *Honorius*'s Condescention, a noble Example was here given of the most generous, and exalted, Friendship; and of that absolute *Self-Conquest*, which *Solomon*, the wisest of all Men, prefers to the *Conquering of a City.*


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